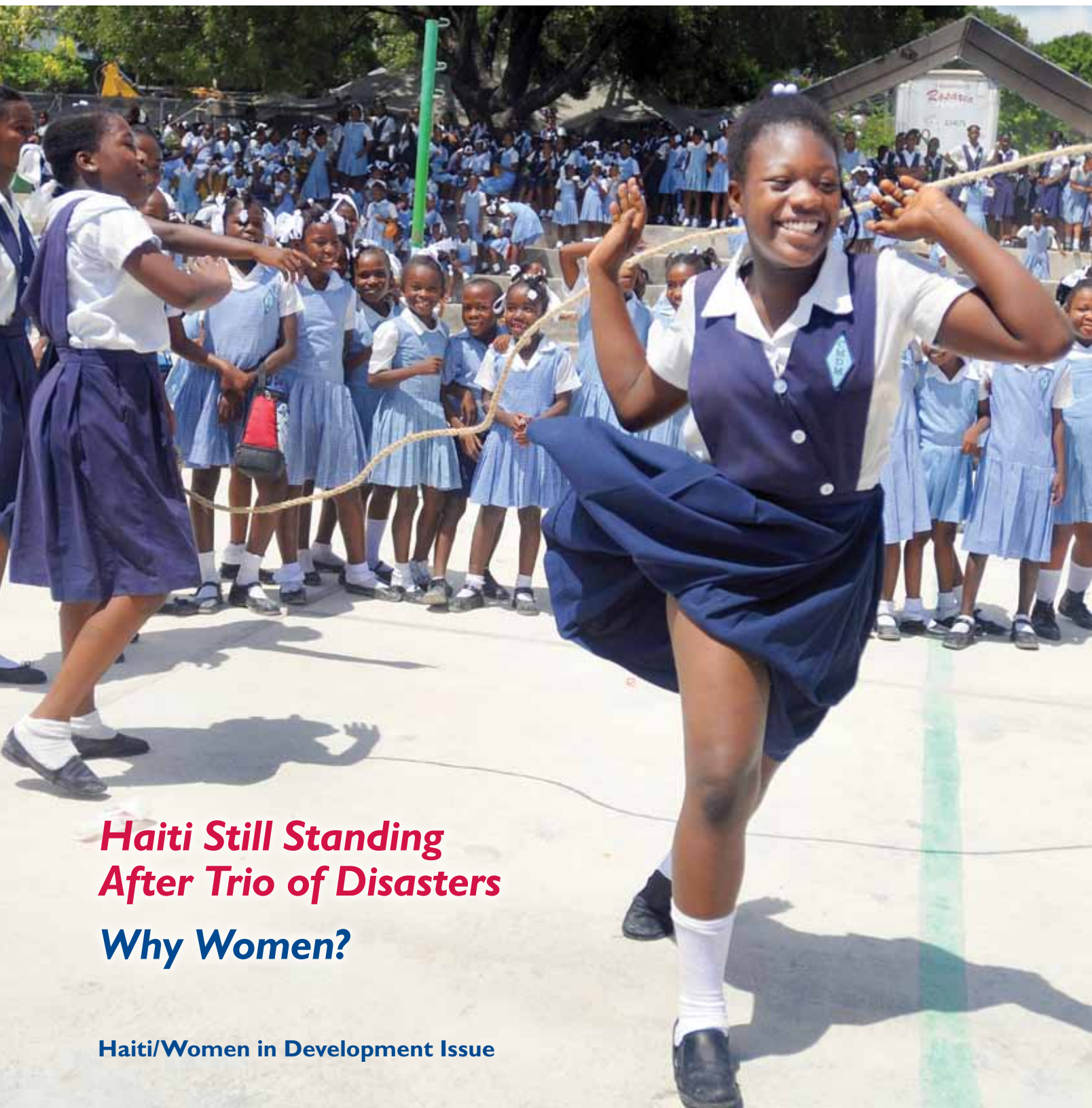


FRONTLINES

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February/March 2011



***Haiti Still Standing
After Trio of Disasters***

Why Women?

Haiti/Women in Development Issue



INSIGHTS

From Administrator Dr. Rajiv Shah

Nearly all the many development challenges USAID faces today converge in one form or another in Haiti, USAID's highest development priority in the Western Hemisphere. I'm encouraged by the progress the country has made over the past year. In coordination with other donors and in support of the government of Haiti, USAID has saved countless lives, begun to build the country back better, and strengthened the government's capacity to provide for its citizens. The number of Haitians living in camps has fallen by half a million since last spring. The U.S. government alone has removed nearly 1.5 million cubic meters of rubble. More Haitians have access to clean water and health services today than before last year's devastating earthquake.

As we move into the second year of post-earthquake recovery and reconstruction, we are working hard to implement a new approach to development.

We are partnering successfully with Haitian government institutions to respond to the cholera epidemic, address security, and boost the economy. Thanks to the leadership of the Haitian Ministry of Health, with the

support of the international community, the cholera epidemic has stabilized, with the number of cases growing more slowly and the fatality rate down.

We are ramping up our partnerships with the private sector to generate jobs and benefit from innovative approaches to tackling development challenges. For example, spurred on by an incentive fund created by USAID and the Gates Foundation, the telecommunications company Digicel introduced a mobile banking service that will provide any Haitian with a cell phone with access to financial services. (See page 8.)

Despite the daunting challenges in Haiti, I am hopeful about the country's prospects.

And we are including the Haitian people in the reconstruction effort. As contracts are awarded in the coming months, we will be reaching out to Haitian organizations to maximize their ability to compete. To the extent possible, we want to partner with local entities, rather than outside contractors, in order to creating lasting local capacity.

To be sure, the challenges before us are still formidable. With over

800,000 Haitians still living in camps, moving people into safe, resilient housing is one of our top priorities. Another is clearing away the remaining rubble. To make more progress on this front, we need help from other donors and the Haitian government in addressing land tenure issues and prioritizing funding for rubble removal and resettlement of the displaced.

Beyond these immediate needs, Haiti's long-term development plan is now in place, with the United States' efforts focused on four areas: infrastructure, health, agriculture, and governance. In a major reconstruction development earlier this year, we reached agreement with the Inter-American Development Bank and one of the world's largest garment makers, Sae-A of South Korea, to develop an industrial park with the potential to double the size of Haiti's textile sector. (See "Mangoes and Tees," page 6.)

Despite the daunting challenges in Haiti, I am hopeful about the country's prospects. We have been encouraged by the ability of Haitian government agencies to rebound from the devastating earthquake and will be eager to work with the new government when it comes on board. But fundamentally, it is the tenacity and resilience of the Haitian people that inspire and drive us. Their unrelenting determination not just to survive, but to thrive, reminds us all of what is in reach when we join forces for the common good. ■

"I realize that there are among us those who are weary of sustaining this continual effort to help other nations. But I would ask them to look at a map and recognize that many of those whom we help live on the 'front lines' of the long twilight struggle for freedom—that others are new nations posed between order and chaos—and the rest are older nations now undergoing a turbulent transition of new expectations. Our efforts to help them help themselves, to demonstrate and to strengthen the vitality of free institutions, are small in cost compared to our military outlays for the defense of freedom."

—John F. Kennedy, Special Message to the Congress on Foreign Aid, March 13, 1962

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Schoolchildren jump rope at Ecole Marie Dominique Mazzarello in Port-au-Prince on June 18, 2010. The students returned to classrooms built with USAID assistance in May. See story on page 14.



Photo by Kendra Helmer, USAID

The Most Resilient

Haiti Still Standing After Trio of Disasters



Photo by Jewel Samad, AFP

A Haitian woman rests on the rubble of a destroyed building at a market in Port-au-Prince following a massive 7.0-magnitude quake in January 2010.

By Ben Edwards

Haiti is one of the U.S. government's critical priority countries, if not in terms of possessing an official "CPC" designation, then surely in terms of scope of U.S. government commitment. The special status is not unfounded. The Caribbean nation is rounding the corner on a year marred by a trio of disasters.

The fateful run of bad fortune began on Jan. 12, 2010, when an earthquake with an epicenter near Port-au-Prince took the lives of 230,000 people, and left an estimated 10 million cubic meters of rubble. In the months following the earthquake, a hurricane lashed Haiti's western coast and a cholera outbreak spread throughout the country.

Most Americans know that Haitians are poor and recovery is progressing slowly, but the full story is much more complicated. It's one of old struggles, new challenges, U.S. commitment, and hope.

The earthquake brought global attention to Haiti's hardship, but it didn't bring poverty. Even before the quake, Haiti was the poorest country

People on Earth

in the Western Hemisphere, with most Haitians living on less than a dollar a day. Eighty percent were unemployed and half were illiterate. The country's statistics for governance, health, and economic growth followed the same depressing trend.

The earthquake, however, turned a dire situation into a desperate one. For many Haitians, it took their homes, it took their jobs, it took their lives.

"Words can't do justice to the earthquake's destruction," said USAID/Haiti Mission Director Carleene Dei. "Some neighborhoods were so badly damaged, it's impossible to tell what they looked like before the earthquake."

One year later, the situation appears almost as bad as it did during the immediate aftermath of the earthquake. Most of the rubble remains unmoved. Over a million Haitians live in the tents that cover almost every inch of public space in Port-au-Prince. Perhaps worst of all, cholera continues to take lives and cause illness. Progress toward reconstruction is moving slowly.

Despite the challenges that persist, the international community, especially the U.S. government and the American people, has rallied to support Haiti. The U.S. government spent over \$1.16 billion and saved countless lives during the earthquake response. That money fed more than 3.5 million people, provided Haitians with 800,000 mosquito nets to protect

against malaria, immunized a million Haitians against common diseases, and increased access to safe drinking water above pre-earthquake levels.

"Stories that do not get written"

Mark Feierstein, assistant administrator for the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, considers the response a success, even though serious challenges linger a year after the earthquake.

"Haitian farmers participating in our watershed program increased food production by an average of 75 percent in the spring 2010 planting season."

"The success of the U.S. government's response is measured in the tragedies averted and in the stories that do not get written," Feierstein said.

The initial relief phase brought relative stability to Haiti and laid the groundwork for the long road to reconstruction. Signs of progress are beginning to emerge.

"We're already seeing results from our investments in agriculture," said Feierstein. "Haitian farmers participating in our watershed program increased food production by an average of 75 percent in the spring 2010 planting season."

In most developing countries, progress moves slowly after disasters. Haiti will be no exception, and the rebuilding effort could take even longer than it has in other post-disaster scenarios. Because Haiti was among the poorest countries in the world before this surge of disasters and the damage from the disasters was so great, a reconstruction effort of this magnitude is unprecedented.

Because the goal of reconstruction is to build a better Haiti than the one that existed before the earthquake, U.S. investments are targeting four priorities: economic growth, infrastructure, health and other basic services, and governance.

The Haitian government is leading the reconstruction effort. Any progress made with the help of the U.S. and international community will only be sustained through strong leadership by the Haitian government.

But perhaps the strongest asset is the country's people. It is the Haitians themselves who are making progress toward reconstruction. Despite the daunting challenges, they are learning new farming techniques that boost their food production, and they are removing rubble by hand. Haitians may, in fact, prove to be the most resilient people on earth. ■

VIDEO ONLINE AT:
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Faced with Destruction, Earthquake Responders Address Immediate Suffering

By Angela Rucker

Just after 4:53 p.m. on Jan. 12, 2010, nearly everything in the Haiti earthquake zone crumbled and froze. Grocery shoppers pinned under supermarket shelves. Bureaucrats wedged in front of their computers. Students powerless to wriggle out of their school chairs. Street vendors felled by chunks of buildings.

In the hours and days after the Haitian earthquake that would later be called unprecedented in its reach and destruction, USAID poured staffers and millions of dollars into a full-on response to help save lives and alleviate suffering of the Haitian people.

“You look at the initial week to two weeks,” said Tim Callaghan, the senior regional adviser for the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance for the Latin America and Caribbean region. “You had rescue workers funded by USAID as part of the DART [Disaster Assistance Response Team] team on the ground within 22 hours. “That’s the way it should be. That’s what was needed.”

The earthquake’s epicenter was about 16 miles west of Port-au-Prince, close to the town of Leogane, which lost over 90 percent of its buildings, but the damage stretched to the Haitian capital and beyond. With lax or nonexistent building codes, Haiti’s poorly constructed concrete structures collapsed and turned to rubble or became unstable and uninhabitable. Minutes after the quake, dust clouds shrouded Port-au-Prince and survivors.



Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Dennis J. Henry Jr.

USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, left, visits a hospital in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Jan. 23, 2010.

When the dust settled, there was destruction and mayhem. More than 230,000 were killed immediately or shortly after the quake—many left lying on city streets while officials began digging mass graves. On the nearby coast of the island nation, houses were consumed by the sea with only their roofs remaining above the waves.

As many as 300,000 people suffered injuries, some life-altering. More than 1 million were immediately homeless. Most survivors were haunted by what they saw and felt—aftershocks continued for weeks.

The earthquake caused \$7.8 billion in damages and losses, and predictions are that it will take Haiti years, if not decades, to recover and “build back better.”

“The Haiti earthquake is the largest disaster in the Western Hemisphere. In no one’s recollection do you have a capital city brought to its knees,” said Paul Weisenfeld, the first coordinator of the Haiti Task Team and a deputy assistant administrator in the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean.

All of this came just four days after Administrator Rajiv Shah was formally sworn in to the top job at USAID, at which time he delivered a hopeful speech outlining a vision of reform for the Agency. Carleene Dei, the new Haiti mission director, had arrived just 24 hours before the quake.

USAID Called to Lead

Soon, though, the earthquake response would become their primary focus. President Barack Obama called on USAID—and Shah—to lead the coordinated U.S. response to the quake. The response became the United States' largest international humanitarian response to a natural disaster.

Unlike a hurricane or a flood, said Callaghan, there is no warning for earthquakes and no time to prepare. "Speed is critical," he said.

"You have mechanisms in place to move people into place. I believe that so many of the systems we have in place allowed us to be responsive," he

said. "I firmly believe that the U.S. government has the capability to adequately respond and support any government" dealing with a catastrophic natural disaster.

Hours after the quake, USAID flew in urban search and rescue teams to help rescue survivors trapped in the rubble. At the height of the effort, the teams included 500 personnel who worked nearly around the clock as part of a massive international effort to free people from crumbled buildings, saving more than 130 lives.

Following the quake, the international community distributed food to more than 3.5 million people—the largest emergency urban food

distribution system ever, and provided shelter to 1.5 million. Six months later, approximately 1 million people had been immunized against highly communicable diseases such as polio and measles.

In Haiti, USAID staff were not untouched—both Haitian and American staff lost close friends and family members. Staff who were not attending to family, or evacuated, worked tirelessly through 20-hour workdays, with surge staff called in from around the globe. Most slept on the embassy floor or in tents on the compound.

"We were lucky because our building stood," said Weisenfeld, adding that mission staff "dropped 50 percent just when the workload grew 1,000 percent."

The United Nations' Haiti headquarters collapsed, as well as buildings that housed Haiti's national ministries, taking with them hundreds of civil servants and international aid workers who would have played key roles in directing the disaster response.

In Washington, USAID officials activated a Response Management Team, or RMT, on the top floor of the Agency where USAID and other U.S. government workers—from the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, and Health and Human Services, as well as the Federal Emergency Management Agency—also worked around the clock on the response.



Photo by Kendra Helmer, USAID

A woman catches a bucket in a line for rubble removal in the hilly Ravine Pintade neighborhood in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Feb. 16, 2011. About 75 percent of the neighborhood's structures were destroyed in the earthquake. With the help of USAID, workers are removing rubble, repairing homes, and building shelters.

Mangoes and Tees: The Next Phase of Haitian Recovery?

Photo by Kendra Helmer, USAID



John Atis, the regional director for USAID's Watershed Initiative for National Natural Environmental Resources (WINNER) program in Kenscoff, Haiti, talks about cabbage grown at the Wynne Farm, a mountaintop training facility for farmers.

Focus on Agriculture and Manufacturing Offers Opportunities for a New Generation

By Jayanthi Narain

In addition to the incredible human loss suffered on Jan. 12, 2010, the 7.0 earthquake that struck Port-au-Prince damaged critical infrastructure and caused \$7.8 billion in damages and losses—equal to 120 percent of Haiti's 2009 GDP.

Haitians are eager to rebuild and work toward a brighter future, and a year after the earthquake, USAID continues to provide support for much-needed basic services while helping the country embark on a plan of sustainable economic development. But with so much destruction to both infrastructure and human resources, it is critical that reconstruction efforts be

carefully targeted, playing to Haiti's strengths and comparative advantages.

The Agency's economic growth programs target sectors like agriculture and garment manufacturing. These programs are designed to facilitate trade, rebuild the private sector, increase incomes and living standards, create employment opportunities, and improve youth workforce skills.

Hope in Mangoes

Earlier this year, USAID partnered with the non-profit organizations CHF and Citizen Network for Foreign Affairs, and agribusiness firm Jean-Maurice Buteau S.A. to strengthen local farmer associations and open two post-harvest mango centers in Cabaret and Saut d'Eau.

Even though mangoes are one of Haiti's top export crops, farmers lose 30–40 percent of their post-harvest crop because of lack of training and

infrastructure. Poorly packaged products can get bruised or spoil, and foreign importers must be able to verify the origin of the mangoes.

At the two new centers, workers prepare mangoes and other produce for export, ensuring that the goods are packaged properly and meet the standards of foreign importers. In addition to creating jobs at the center itself, this public-private partnership—implemented by CHF International Haiti, a Maryland-based nonprofit organization and USAID partner—will increase production and incomes up to an estimated 20 percent for thousands of Haitian farmers.

“We’re proud to support farmers and help make their products available to more people, including buyers overseas,” said USAID/Haiti Mission Director Carleene Dei. “These centers teach farmers how to better package and sell their produce, which will increase their marketability and raise incomes. The centers will help Haiti leverage its precious natural resources and help farmers realize their crops’ full economic potential.”

USAID is also helping Haitian farmers by supporting the Coca-Cola Haiti Hope Project. The Agency is providing \$1 million in funding for the public-private initiative to develop a sustainable mango industry, including the mango juice industry, in Haiti. With support from Coca-Cola, the U.S. government, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Clinton Bush Haiti Fund, the Haiti Hope Project focuses on improving local mango farming

capacity to increase farmer incomes and stimulate economic growth and sustainable development.

Garments to Move Masses

Another key U.S. public-private partnership focuses on the garment industry to create jobs in areas outside the crowded capital city.

Along with the Haitian government and the Inter-American Development Bank, the United States recently signed an agreement to construct an industrial park in Haiti's north with South Korea's leading garment manufacturer, Sae-A Trading Co. Ltd, as the anchor tenant. Sae-A alone will bring an estimated 20,000 permanent jobs to the area, and total employment is projected at 65,000 permanent jobs once the park is fully developed.

The U.S. Congress's passage of the Haiti Economic Lift Program (HELP) Act in May 2010 essentially promotes investment in Haiti and supports the rebuilding of the garment sector. By significantly increasing U.S. trade preferences for Haitian apparel, the HELP Act was a critical catalyst that, in turn, has made Haiti more attractive to large-scale manufacturing operations like Sae-A. As the first manufacturer to produce apparel with textiles made in Haiti, the Northern Industrial Park is expected to greatly increase garment production and volume of trade.

USAID economic programs work hand-in-hand with training and education. Through facilities like the Port-au-Prince Haiti Apparel Center—a 6,000 square meter facility built to train more than 2,000 workers a year

for the garment industry—USAID is helping to ensure that Haiti's youth have the technical training required for tomorrow's jobs.

“Providing technical training in conjunction with job creation programs is a great way to prepare Haiti's youth for the economic opportunities that are growing as investment in Haiti increases,” Dei said.

Apart from training, technological innovation is also helping Haitians look to future economic security through increased financial services and access to savings. The Haiti Mobile Money Initiative, a partnership between USAID and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, has helped launch mobile money services in Haiti so millions of Haitians who use mobile phones can use pre-existing and readily available technology to send, receive, and store money safely, as well as to transact for basic goods. (See story on page 8.)

Making the most of simple technologies is also the basis for the USAID WINNER project, an agricultural program that operates on a similar principle of optimizing agricultural production through simple techniques and changes in planting and fertilization.

In addition to infrastructure repair and reforestation activities, WINNER, which stands for Watershed Initiative for National Natural Environmental Resources, uses demonstration farms as training grounds. One technique imparted on WINNER's model farms is vertical agriculture, which allows farmers to grow more in a limited



Photo by Steve Zhou, Drinkwhat.com

Profits from the sale of Odwalla Haiti Hope Mango Lime-Aid help support the Coca-Cola Haiti Hope Project, a public-private initiative to develop a sustainable mango industry in Haiti.

space, thereby discouraging the cultivation of lands that are unsuited for agricultural production such as steep slopes.

In 2010, WINNER's work with the Haitian Ministry of Agriculture helped more than 10,500 small- and medium-sized farmers grow corn, sorghum, beans, potatoes, and other vegetables. WINNER-trained extension agents offered new techniques to the farmers, who planted over three-quarters of their land with local crop varieties. Overall, the campaign increased production by 75 percent.

No single effort alone, no magic bullet, will result in a path out of poverty for Haiti. Instead, recovery will come as basic services continue to improve, providing the backbone for recovery, and smart economic investments allow the Haiti people to help themselves. ■

VIDEO ONLINE AT:
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Mobile Banking: Will It Transform Haiti's Transactions?



Photo by Fabiola Coupet, Mercy Corps

The man on the left explains how to use mobile money in Haiti's Pandiassou community as part of a USAID grant to Mercy Corps.

By Ben Edwards

Imagine a world without bank accounts. Forget the conveniences of direct deposits, checks, and wire transfers. Distance yourself from the luxuries of credit cards, loans, and retirement funds. In this unpleasant fiction, ATMs, CDs, and 401(k)s are MIA.

This was the unfortunate reality for nine out of 10 Haitians on Jan. 11, 2010. The next day, an earthquake struck, which destroyed a third of the country's few existing bank branches, further limiting access to financial services.

Access to even basic services like savings, cash withdrawals, and money transfers are much more than modern

conveniences. They empower the poor, who are least equipped to cope with unexpected events, and, in some cases, help them avoid financial catastrophe.

The dearth of banking services has been one of many hurdles to Haiti's economic growth. But a new technology has arrived in Haiti that could transform personal banking.

Leading mobile telecommunications operators recently launched a mobile money service in the country, putting the power of cash deposits, withdrawals, and person-to-person transfers into the palms of Haitian hands.

Along with traditional banking services, mobile banking also facilitates everyday transactions, allowing Haitians to store money on a cell

phone's identification, or SIM, card and purchase goods—anything from a loaf of bread to building supplies—by entering a personal identification number, or PIN. Once a transaction is completed, both buyer and seller receive a message confirming that the money was successfully transferred.

Harnessing the Private Sector

USAID and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation partnered on the Haiti Mobile Money Initiative (HMMI) to bring innovative mobile technologies to the island nation. HMMI is a \$10 million incentive fund designed to expand access to financial services in Haiti by harnessing the power of the private sector.

Under the initiative, companies like Digicel and Voilà, leading mobile phone networks in Haiti, compete for cash prizes that are awarded once a company reaches milestones set by the competition criteria. Digicel won the first tranche of money, a \$2.5 million prize, in January for being the first competitor to provide the service within the established criteria. The HMMI's verification process ensured that Digicel launched the service within six months of the award's announcement in June 2010 and processed 10,000 mobile money transactions through a network of at least 100 new agents.

"The launch of mobile money is an encouraging achievement," said USAID/Haiti Mission Director Carleene Dei. "The additional \$1.5 million for the Second-to-Market [the second company to launch the service within the established criteria] award

and \$6 million in scaling awards will help mobile money become sustainable in Haiti.”

The Next Kenya?

The vast majority of Haitians without access to banks carry their cash with them or store it in their home. This is risky, especially for those Haitians living in shelters and tents that don't have locks.

But the technology's precedent is encouraging. Mobile banking is already beginning to reduce the risks and costs of monetary transactions, increase savings, and generate employment in other countries. In Kenya, the trailblazer of sorts in mobile money technologies, Safaricom's mobile banking service M-PESA has 12 million customers—more than half of all adult Kenyans—according to a recent study by Ignacio Mas and Daniel Radcliffe of the Gates Foundation. M-PESA customers pay for everything from taxi fares to school fees through their phones.

The benefits in Haiti could even outpace those seen in Kenya. Haitians living in the United States and other wealthy countries send large sums of money to family members and friends who struggle with high unemployment back home. Mobile money can make it easier and exponentially cheaper to send these remittances, which already put \$1.5 to \$1.8 billion into the hands of Haitians every year according to Dilip Ratha, a remittance expert at the World Bank. While Western Union can charge up to 10 percent for this cash, cell phone companies charge only 1 percent,

meaning hundreds of millions of dollars more stay in the hands of those who most need it.

“[One day] I'll engage in as sophisticated a financial transaction as Haitians—say, walking into a deli and buying a pastrami on rye with my BlackBerry.”

The Developed World Next?

In a sense, mobile money is an example of an innovation tailored for the developing world that the developed world has begun to covet. In a recent opinion piece for *The New York Times*, columnist Nicholas Kristof described the mobile banking revolution he saw taking place on a trip to the Caribbean nation, signing off with: “Some day, I'm pretty sure, I'll engage in as sophisticated a financial transaction as Haitians—say, walking into a deli and buying a pastrami on rye with my BlackBerry—without even leaving Manhattan.”

But while in the United States this would be a luxury, in Haiti it is responding to very real challenges: a limited banking infrastructure, high transfer fees charged by money transfer companies such as Western Union, and a lack of steady income and banking culture—a convergence of factors that all lead to the inability to save. Until now.

It's too soon to tell if mobile money will become as successful as it is in Kenya, but it looks promising.

Three-fourths of Haitians own a mobile phone. Mobile money services are already being offered by three companies. More generally, mobile technology's biggest advocates are hoping that the new initiative could eventually become a “leapfrog” technology, an innovation with such profound effects that it can help developing nations make up for decades of being left in the developed world's wake.

“The mobile money partnership with the Gates Foundation and this bold approach to private sector solutions holds the promise to enable millions of families to be a part of the formal financial system so that they can safely save their money and, in time, finance their way to a better education, better housing, and a better life,” said USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah.

The launch of the mobile money service in Haiti is the result of cooperation among the mobile money networks, their bank partners, and the financial and communications regulatory authorities. Collaboration with the Haitian Central Bank from the onset of the competition will help to provide for sustainable mobile money service countrywide.

Early signs of progress are due in large part to the leadership of Haitian and international institutions. The future of mobile money in Haiti will likely depend on their sustained leadership. ■

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Haiti 2010 Timeline

January 2010

At 4:53 p.m. on Jan. 12, a 7.0 magnitude earthquake rocks Haiti, killing 230,000 people and leaving more than 1.5 million homeless. Over the next several days, the U.S. ambassador in Haiti declares a state of emergency, releasing money for immediate assistance. USAID's DART (Disaster Assistance Response Team) and search and rescue teams from the United States and other countries arrive in Port-au-Prince, initiating one of the most successful international rescue efforts to date. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah fly to meet with Haitian President René Préval and other officials in Haiti. The island government, on Jan. 18, declares a country-wide state of emergency and one month of mourning.

February



The International Office for Migration distributes aid on Feb. 18, 2010, in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. More than a million people were left homeless by the Jan. 12 earthquake.

The government of Haiti, the Pan American Health Organization, the United Nations World Health Organization, and the United Nations Children's Fund officially begin a massive immunization campaign in Port-au-Prince. By mid-year, more than 1 million people are immunized against diseases including rubella and diphtheria.

March

Representatives from over 150 countries and international organizations gather at United Nations headquarters in New York to pledge financial support to help Haiti with post-earthquake reconstruction.

K-9 teams from Fairfax County, Va., Urban Search and Rescue, working with USAID, leave the hangar to board a plane bound for Haiti, Jan. 13, 2010.

Photo by
Thony Belzaine

June

The Interim Haitian Recovery Commission, known as IHRC, and co-chaired by Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive and former U.S. President Bill Clinton, holds its first meeting in Port-au-Prince. The IHRC is focused on coordinating with donors to ensure that earthquake relief projects are well planned, sequenced, and prioritized to meet Haiti's needs and development priorities.

July

By the six-month commemoration of Haiti's earthquake, USAID has participated in the largest urban food distribution in history to feed more than 3.5 million people, and helps distribute emergency shelters to 1 million people. Administrator Shah travels to Haiti and notes that USAID's work has only just begun and significant challenges lay before Haiti and the international community: "The U.S. has committed more than \$1 billion to Haiti's long-term reconstruction and development," he said. "USAID is working with our colleagues at the Department of State and others across the federal government to apply the experience and knowledge of our development experts to high-impact projects in five key areas: agriculture, energy, governance support, infrastructure, and health."



Photo by
Paul J. Richards, AFP

August

USAID opens the Haiti Apparel Center, which will strengthen the country's private sector workforce by training garment industry workers. In addition to providing vocational training, the center will maximize the benefits of the Haitian Economic Lift Program (HELP) Act signed into law in May, which improves U.S. market access for Haitian apparel exports. The center also helps to set the stage for an agreement in January 2011 between the U.S. and Haitian governments, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Sae-A Trading Co. Ltd. to build and operate an industrial park, which is projected to create 65,000 jobs.

October

In an early sign of progress, Haitian farmers participating in a USAID-funded agriculture program increase overall food production by 75 percent compared to the spring 2010 planting season. The USAID WINNER program's work with the Haitian Ministry of Agriculture assists over 10,500 small- and medium-sized farmers growing corn, sorghum, beans, potatoes, and other vegetables. And, in an unexpected setback, U.S. Ambassador Kenneth H. Merten issues a disaster declaration due to a cholera outbreak.

November

Hurricane Tomas makes landfall on Haiti's southwestern coast, but leaves comparatively little damage when held up against previous hurricanes and the devastating Jan. 12 earthquake. In addition, the country holds its first presidential and parliamentary elections since the earthquake.

December

Mobile phone carrier Digicel claims the first mobile banking award through the Agency's partnership in the Haiti Mobile Money Initiative.

January 2011

Working in conjunction with the government of Haiti, the World Bank, and the United Nations Office for Project Services, USAID partners complete assessments of nearly 400,000 buildings in Port-au-Prince affected by the earthquake. Of these, over 50 percent are determined safe for habitation. Approximately 24 percent are determined to be mildly damaged, meaning they can be made safe for families to move back with a few simple repairs. By early February, USAID has completed repairs on structures sufficient to house almost 2,400 households, with more repairs in process.

VIDEO ONLINE AT:
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Photo by Kendra Helmer, USAID

Two women carry rubble to be crushed and recycled for use in earthquake recovery efforts in Carrefour, Haiti, Feb. 15, 2011. The women are working in a USAID program run by CHF International.



8 Questions with Mission Director Carleene Dei

Carleene Dei arrived in Haiti to serve as the USAID mission director on Jan. 11, 2010, the day before the cataclysmic earthquake. Since then, she has been focused on ensuring USAID's optimal involvement in the massive multi-donor response and reconstruction effort. Dei first joined USAID in 1988, serving as a regional housing and urban development officer in Côte d'Ivoire, and then in South Africa. For the past 13 years, she has served in leadership positions in Washington, D.C., and Africa.



Carleene Dei

FRONTLINES

What is the one thing you wish someone had told you, and that you can now share with newbies, before moving to the country in which you currently serve?

CARLEENE DEI

Haiti is a land of never-ending surprises. Things are rarely what they initially appear to be, so you need to keep an open mind, and to be able to adapt quickly to changing conditions.

FL What is the most rewarding aspect of your job?

CD Even after experiencing a 7.0 earthquake, Hurricane Tomas, and now a cholera epidemic, I am proud to be a part of the USG effort that is providing vital services to Haitians, in close collaboration with our Haitian partners.

We're saving lives every day and working with the government of Haiti, and with the new Interim Haiti Reconstruction Commission to rebuild. Interestingly, it is the small successes that are most rewarding. We work with an NGO that provides unemployed youth with basic literacy and job skills. My hero is a young woman who was taught to be a welder—traditionally a man's occupation. She is now a respected professional in a town that was devastated by the earthquake. Her skills are making an important contribution to the rebuilding effort.

FL How do you deal with the hazards posed working in a priority country? That is, what helps you to work in an environment amid high threats and high security?

CD There is so much to do and so little time to do it that one simply does not have time to brood over the dangers and the “what ifs.” Instead, I focus on prioritizing and completing those critical tasks—strategizing, designing, contracting, and implementing programs that must be accomplished in order to turn the tide.

FL What has been the most difficult experience at your job?

CD Experiencing the earthquake 24 hours after arriving in the country and then living through dozens of aftershocks. I developed a noticeable tremor in my right hand that lasted for almost six months. We also have an acute shortage of staff that, thankfully, is now being addressed. With luck we should have a full complement on board by summer.

FL How has your work with USAID changed the way you view the world? Has your view of the United States and its relationship to other countries changed?

CD I now firmly believe that under-development and poverty is as much a lack of resources as it is an absence of political will. Leaders do not want to change, and people rarely have the wherewithal to demand change. Of course, at some point in time, something gives. Our agency’s essential contribution to the change process is to lend a helping hand to any and everyone who wants to make things better. I believe that in Haiti, the stars—resources, people, and a strong desire to “build back better,” for example—will make a difference. We have already observed a marked improvement in the quality of the government of Haiti’s response to the recent hurricane and to the current cholera epidemic. Finally, I have learned that it is the commitment of my colleagues—Americans and Foreign Service Nationals—that ultimately ensures the success of our agency’s programs.



Photo by Kendra Helmer, USAID

USAID/Haiti Mission Director Carleene Dei (right) looks at crops grown as part of USAID’s WINNER program.

FL What is your favorite thing to do in your residence country on your days off?

CD I read good fiction every chance I get. It allows my brain to cool off and to return refreshed and renewed to the issues at hand.

FL What is the one thing you took for granted in the United States that you no longer would?

CD I was born in Jamaica, an island that is designated “a developing country,” so I do not take things for granted.

FL What would you say is your “grain of sand”; what you will leave behind as your most important accomplishment in the country you served?

CD I would like my epitaph to read: “She always did her best.” ■

With a Roof Over Their Heads...

Shelter and Supplies Help Kids Back to School

By Ben Edwards

A Haitian nun who goes by the name Sister Rose runs the L'Ecole Sacre Coeur, a girl's primary and secondary school located in Cap-Haïtien, a relatively large port town in northern Haiti. She speaks softly as she glides through an empty courtyard that will soon be filled with students.

"This year," she says, "we can teach more students. We used to have enough classrooms for 1,200 students, but now we have space for more than 1,300 students and an extra room for computers."

The expanded enrollment is due, in part, to a tin roof funded by USAID. The industrial-looking roof rests atop the second story of the school building. It covers two new classrooms and an additional room for the school's 12 donated computers. Parents pitched in to fund construction of the walls earlier this year, but the new section of the school sat roofless after Sister Rose ran out of funds.

"There was no money left," she said soberly. "I don't know how long it would have taken to find the money to finish the new section [of the school]."

With just a few days until the start of the school year in October, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) partnered with the municipality of Cap-Haïtien to provide the school with an in-kind grant to cover and furnish the roofless rooms and ensure it didn't go student-less.



Photo by Kendra Helmer, USAID

Schoolchildren concentrate at Ecole Marie Dominique Mazzarello in Port-au-Prince. The school's classrooms were built with USAID assistance.

Quick and Nimble

Small projects that make an immediate impact are OTI's bread and butter. The USAID office uses fast and flexible grants to target regions at risk of instability. In this case, OTI's partner, Development Alternatives Inc., contracted with local Haitians to do the work. OTI's quick-fire approach complements USAID's program funding for larger projects that often take more time as they require assessments to ensure long-term impact.

Haiti's education sector was bad before the Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake, and it's likely much worse a year later. Nine out of 10 schools in Haiti are private institutions, according to the Inter-American Development Bank. Around half of Haitian children of appropriate age were not enrolled in primary school even before the earthquake, which damaged or destroyed 4,000 schools. USAID has helped the

Haitian Ministry of Education build 56 semi-permanent schools, but there is still a long way to go.

Sister Rose intends to use the new rooms for more than students. She plans to invite adults who want to expand or hone their professional skills to do so at the school after hours.

"I can help the parents, too," she said. "I will teach market women the skills to run a business."

Cap-Haïtien was not directly affected by the earthquake, but many Haitians came to the port town after the disaster in search of shelter, jobs, and support from family members. The relatively few jobs that exist in Haiti—and the relatively large number of Haitians seeking them—are disproportionately located in the capital city of Port-au-Prince.

With its epicenter near Port-au-Prince, the earthquake destroyed many businesses and houses,



Photo by Kendra Helmer, USAID

Schoolchildren run to recess at Ecole Marie Dominique Mazzarello in Port-au-Prince on June 18, 2010.

eliminating jobs and homes in the surrounding area. Investments in Cap-Haïtien could open a new venue for Haitians looking to get back to work while decentralizing and diversifying the country's economy and population.



Photo by Ben Edwards, USAID

Backpacks rest against a classroom wall in a Cap-Haïtien school.

Hundreds of Backpacks

At a different school across town, hundreds of colorful backpacks filled with school supplies sat in stacks along a classroom wall, while hundreds more leaned against an adjacent wall waiting to be filled.

A group of effervescent mothers stuffed school supplies into the new backpacks as part of USAID's temporary employment program, often referred to by Haitians as cash-for-work. The smiling mothers and colorful backpacks contrasted with the old school's peeling paint and buckling floorboards.

With school starting in a few days, students needed notebooks, pencils, protractors, and other supplies. OTI and the municipality have also

partnered to reinforce the school building to ensure the safety of the students.

At both Cap-Haïtien schools, USAID is working to boost Haiti's education sector while helping to stabilize potentially volatile communities and make them more attractive alternatives to living in Port-au-Prince. None of these tasks is easy and progress is slow, but the impact is already visible on the faces of Haitian mothers and children. ■

VIDEO ONLINE AT:
www.usaid.gov/frontlines



Your Voice: Dèyè Mòn Gen Mòn

Your Voice, a continuing FrontLines feature, offers personal observations from USAID employees. Ryan Cherlin is the strategic communications officer for the Bureau for Global Health. A version of this Your Voice first appeared at IMPACT-blog, <http://blog.usaid.gov>.

By Ryan Cherlin

When a Haitian says, *Dèyè mòn gen mòn* (beyond mountains there are more mountains), they mean to say, as you solve one problem there is always another that must also be solved.

Driving through the densely populated city of Port-au-Prince, where I visited for two and a half weeks in early January, I wondered how many times this old proverb was the subject of conversation this past year. In the months following the Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake, Haitians endured the devastating effects of Hurricane Tomas, political instability, and violence stemming from a presidential election and a cholera epidemic.

Foreign aid workers continue the behemoth task of delivering the humanitarian and development assistance so desperately needed by the Haitian people. Despite some media reports of stagnant progress, one only has to scratch the surface to realize some programs are making a real difference.

I decided to sit down with USAID beneficiaries from Haiti's infamous



Ryan Cherlin

Cité Soleil, an extremely impoverished and densely populated urban slum generally regarded as one of the most dangerous areas in the Western Hemisphere.

Here, Etienne Jean-Gardy and Ernancy Bien-Aime are two youth educators trained by the USAID Leadership Development Program (LDP), which teaches community members about the importance of family planning and HIV prevention and awareness. Armed with knowledge received in training, they host meetings in local parks, in homes, and in schools to disseminate their message in Cité Soleil.

Etienne, a shy, soft-spoken young man in his mid 20s, told the story of a woman who passed away five years ago when her body succumbed to the devastating effects of AIDS. When she learned her HIV status, she instinctively had her seven children tested. Three of her daughters also tested positive. Distraught and shamed by family and friends, she was forced to pack up her home and find a new place to live.

Not long after relocating, she visited the Maison Arc-en-Ciel clinic where she met with LDP youth educators. She eventually came to terms with her status. She was so grateful for the mentorship that she dedicated the little time she had left to her seven children and mentoring others on the importance of family planning and HIV awareness and prevention.

When he finished his story, Etienne leaned over to Dr. Alexandra Emilien, the senior program officer for LDP, who was also playing the role of translator, and whispered something in her ear. Etienne wanted her to tell me the woman in the story was his mother, and she is the reason he joined the program.

More Men; More Services

Ernancy, by comparison, is a self-assured and outspoken woman who talks passionately about her role as a youth educator. Her confidence makes her an incredible asset to the program as she interacts with people in the community.

I asked if she felt being a youth educator was her calling.

Thinking for a minute, she recalled one of her first meetings as a youth educator. A woman approached her after a presentation on HIV prevention and family planning. The woman was 25 years old and already had four children. She had never even heard of family planning and was grateful she attended the session that

Dèyè mòn gen mòn (beyond mountains there are more mountains)

day. Ernancy and a few colleagues gave her money to take a *tap-tap* (local bus) to a local clinic for family planning services.

"I remember thinking about the opportunities she missed out on because she had children at an early age: education and independence," Ernancy said. "That is when I realized the importance of this information."

"When the men come with women to the clinic, you know they see the benefit."

She explained that people want these services once they are made to understand the benefits.

In the past few years, she noted that more and more men come to the clinic to support their wives and girlfriends. "When the men come with women to the clinic, you know they see the benefit," she said laughing.

Clinics in Cité Soleil are beginning to offer HIV testing and family planning services as part of a package because, as both youth educators attested, when you offer more services, people are more likely to come.

"Most people don't have money or the time to take two cabs to two different places," Marjorie Eliacin, the project's communication officer said. "It just makes sense to offer everything in one place."

After the interview, I talked more informally with Etienne and Ernancy. They were both polite, smartly dressed, and well-spoken. They are both educated and compassionate. They envision a future where people have the information they need to help themselves. As youth educators, they have that information thanks to LDP, and they are eager to share what they know with others.

Now back at a desk in Washington, D.C., I recall the sense of optimism I felt listening to the stories of these youth who have invested themselves in the future health and prosperity of Haiti. Their work is important and it is making a difference. The support they receive from USAID programs provides them with the training and resources they need to continue their work. I continue my work with a renewed sense of purpose. My hope is that their stories will inspire others and will demonstrate the continued need for USAID support. ■

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Haiti Fact Box

- Population: 9,719,932 (2011 est.) (Source: CIA World Factbook)
- Percentage of people living below poverty line: 78% (2005 est.) (Source: World Bank)

Main development challenges:

- A 7.0 magnitude earthquake damaged the capital city, Port-au-Prince, in January 2010, causing a severe setback to a country that was already the poorest in the Western Hemisphere. Approximately 3 million people, roughly one-third of the country's population, were affected by the earthquake.
- Two-thirds of all Haitians depend on agriculture, mainly small-scale subsistence farming, and remain vulnerable to damage from frequent natural disasters and widespread deforestation.
- Political violence has plagued Haiti for most of its history. (Source: CIA World Factbook)
- Main USAID assistance sectors: Infrastructure and energy; food and economic security; health and other basic services; and governance and rule of law.
- Year USAID began its program: 1951. (Source: USAID)



On Feb. 9, 2010, Haitian workers demolish the remains of a school that collapsed during the Jan. 12 earthquake.

Faced with Destruction, *continued from p. 5*

“The task team formed when there was still an RMT,” Weisenfeld said. The plan was to focus on forward-leaning events, preparing for the transition from emergency aid to long-term development. “In theory, starting to think about reconstruction planning,” he explained.

Disaster, Unprecedented

In reality, the task team was consumed with the immediate problems on the ground. The disaster simply was unprecedented.

“The problem is there is no fair comparison,” said Weisenfeld, who has worked on other disaster responses at USAID, including the 2007 earthquake in Peru.

Added Callaghan, a 25-year development/disaster response veteran of the region: “This is a tremendously challenging environment. We have four events that took place here in one calendar year”—the earthquake, Hurricane Tomas, a cholera outbreak, and now a disputed election.

All told, the U.S. government spent more than \$1 billion in Haiti in 2010,

mostly on the earthquake and its aftermath, but also on storm and election preparations, and now cholera.

What worked well?

“If you think back, the initial fears were wide-scale unrest, massive disease ... massive death from storms and hurricanes. All of that was avoided and it was all because of international assistance,” Weisenfeld said.

While the Agency focused on providing basic necessities—water, food, and shelter—it also fielded many other issues, including security, particularly in the context of food distribution. “I’m also proud that the USAID response was addressing so many issues at the same time,” Callaghan said.

USAID is providing safe shelter to thousands by fixing repairable houses and constructing transitional shelters on cleared lots. To clear the way for reconstruction, USAID has paid for removal of more than 15 percent of the estimated 10 million cubic meters of rubble. The Agency also helped clear debris from canals to mitigate the effects of the 2010 rain and tropical storm seasons, which run from April through November.

Unfinished Business

Officials agree, however, the job is nowhere near complete.

USAID will use lessons learned from this disaster to perform better in the next, honing in on better coordination of international and U.S. government responses to such disasters.

In spite of some criticism that would follow in the early weeks after the earthquake, Callaghan said he is proud of the USAID response to the crisis.

“I always look at two things that drive me,” he says. The first: “To help people when things are difficult. I always think of the America taxpayers as well. I think the American people can feel proud of the response, especially the search and rescue.”

Back in Haiti a year after the earthquake, Callaghan’s team is now focused on cholera. Still, he reflected on the magnitude of the crisis, the heroics he witnessed during dramatic rescues, and the emotions of the family members of missing Americans whom he spoke with in daily telephone calls during the immediate aftermath of the quake and met in person as they held vigil at the Hotel Montana and other sites.

“It was a day of remembrance,” he said of Jan. 12, 2011. “And certainly for us who worked the event, a tear was shed at 4:53.” ■

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Winning Photo Captures Young USAID Aid Recipients in Sudan

Photo By Karl Grobl, Education Development Center Inc.



The second *FrontLines* photo contest is over and the top prize goes to Karl Grobl, a photojournalist hired by Education Development Center Inc. (EDC) to document its USAID-funded programs in Sudan.

The winning shot features beaming schoolchildren who participate in the Southern Sudan Interactive Radio Instruction (SSIRI) project, which uses radio to broadcast interactive student lessons. The lessons are designed to complement Southern Sudanese primary school classroom instruction.

FrontLines photo contest judges also selected two runners-up—images from Kenya and Swaziland that both

feature USAID-backed health projects. And because the competition was close, judges also selected seven additional remarkable images. All top-10 photos are compiled in a best-in-class photo gallery, which is available at www.usaid.gov/frontlines. Readers can download the images at USAID's photo gallery.

The *FrontLines* photo contest is open to anyone who reads the publication, including USAID employees and alumni; foundation, corporation, and Agency partner personnel; and university students and researchers, among others. Photos must showcase USAID development in action. A panel of judges from USAID's Bureau

for Legislative and Public Affairs reviews the merits of each image before selecting finalists and winners that most effectively illustrate USAID programs.

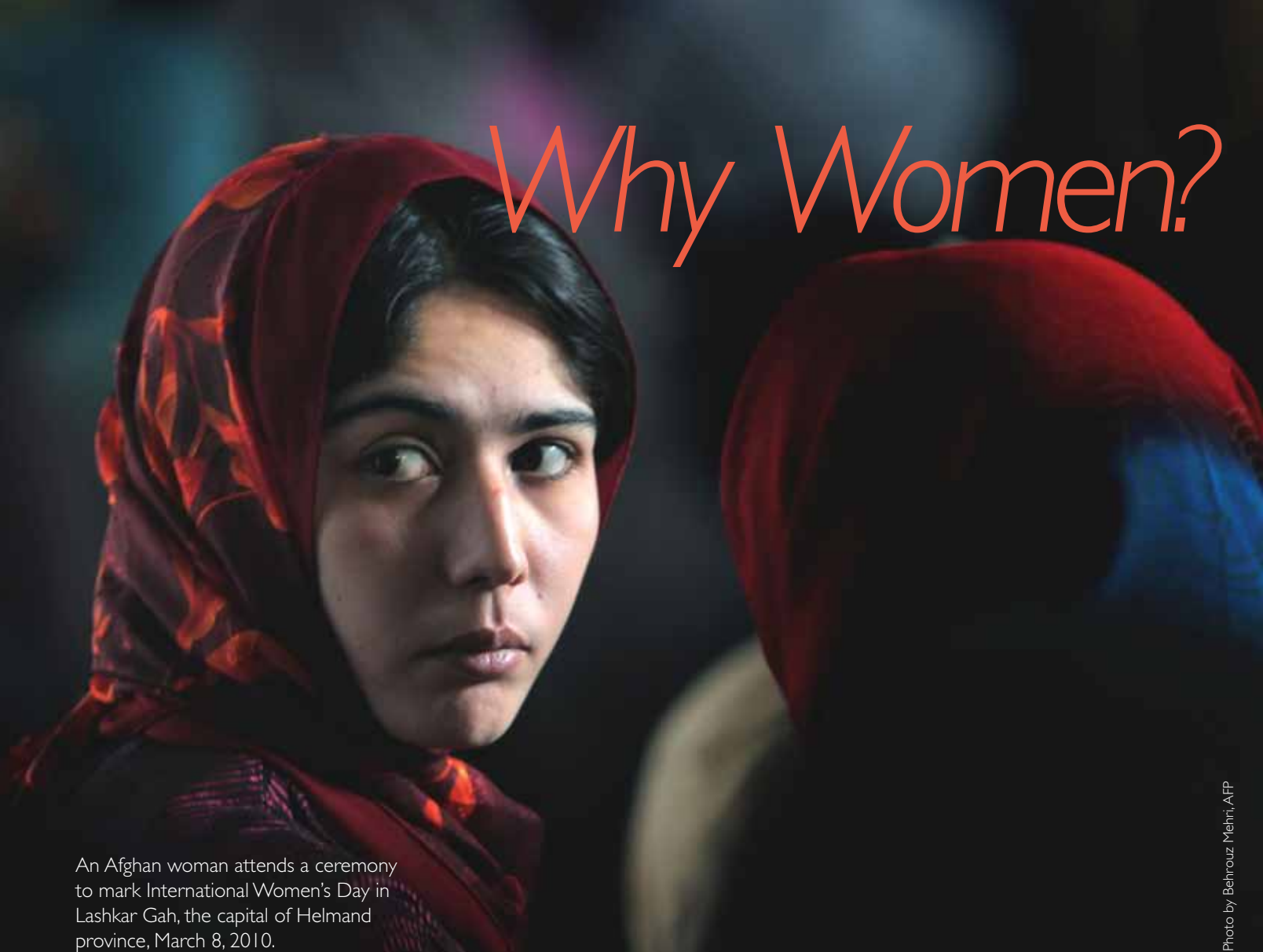
The top image is featured in a rotating gallery on the USAID home page and on the recently revamped *FrontLines* home page.

The deadline for the next *FrontLines* photo contest is April 1. ■

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Why Women?



An Afghan woman attends a ceremony to mark International Women's Day in Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand province, March 8, 2010.

Photo by Behrouz Mehri/AFP

By Mary Ellen Duke

Why women? This should not be a question. Of course, women—especially since we make up 50 percent of the world's population! Every day we read or hear about how girls and women are excluded or absent from places like the secondary school classroom or the boardroom, and even from the World Economic Summit at Davos—where only 16 percent of participants had a second X chromosome.

But what we need to see, read, and hear about are those girls and women who are present and accounted for;

and who are already making a difference in their countries, their region, and, more importantly, their communities. This is where role-modeling begins.

Over the years, from Honduras to Sri Lanka to Southern Africa, I've heard girls and boys around the globe list politicians, musicians, and sports stars as role models. But what about the role models in their own backyards? Young girls in Brazil now know that a woman can become president. This is exciting. But wouldn't it also have been exciting to follow Dilma

Rousseff's pre-presidential path along the way? And what about the other inspiring girls and women who aren't in the national spotlight?

In Egypt, girls and women are out in the street, making their voices heard. Egyptian feminist Nawal el Sadaawi said in a recent interview that women who rarely leave their houses were now protesting in Tahrir Square. Girls and women across all levels need to be seen, heard, and celebrated so that other girls and women can learn from their experiences and perhaps dare to do something they thought

was just for boys or men. The multiplier effect can be a powerful tool, especially in development.

There was a saying in my grandmother's day that a lady should have her name in the newspaper only three times in her life: when she is born, when she gets married, and when she dies. Well, those days are long gone. While we have television, radio, and Internet, we also have town hall meetings, peer education groups, and travelling theater troupes. We need to employ each and every communication tool available to tell stories of those girls and women who are making things happen from the bottom up.

Buses and Chickens, Whatever It Takes

My friend Busisiwe Mamba is a primary school principal in Swaziland, where tuition fees were only recently eliminated for just the first two grades. In addition to running the school, she does anything and everything—from raising chickens to taking public transport to Mozambique to deliver a funding proposal—to feed her students or pay their school fees. She is true a role model, though she is largely unsung.

There are countless other women out there undertaking like feats of dedication, compassion, and resilience. So, why haven't we seen or heard their stories? Why aren't we hearing about women who are in the emerging farmers' programs or the girls who are leading after-school clubs?

Just look around you, every day there is a girl or a woman in your backyard making a difference—you probably haven't heard about her.

In this issue we'll introduce you to 11 talented Mozambican women scientists who have been recognized for their work in agriculture; they have all broken barriers on their paths to academic excellence. And they all have a story to tell and serve as an inspiration not only for girls who are interested in science but, for those girls, boys, and parents who think science is just for boys.

Young girls in Brazil now know that a woman can become president.

Let's start to get the word out about these women, and all of the women and girls whose good works stretch from the smallest grassroots movements to the most revered halls of parliament. We don't need to wait for a woman to become president to talk about her. Now is the time to support and celebrate those community role models making a difference in their own backyards.

And if we do support and celebrate these women, maybe next time when I visit a school, the list of role models will include the names of a neighborhood health worker, an auntie, or a grandmother. ■



Photo by Bita Rodrigues, USAID

Mary Ellen Duke has been the gender adviser for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and USAID in Maputo, Mozambique, since 2009. She previously worked for the Centre for Development and Population Activities and the Salesians of Don Bosco on girls' education, life skills, and technical training programs in Bolivia, Honduras, Lesotho, Nigeria, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, and Zambia. In the 1970s, her seventh-grade teacher told her she didn't really need math because she was a girl. She often wonders how quickly he could do currency conversions in his head while conversing in a language other than English.

Accelerating the Global Health Initiative: Cambodia's HIV/AIDS Efforts Put Women in the Driver's Seat



U.S. Rep. Laura Richardson (D-Calif.), center left, visits a SmartGirl Club and interacts with beneficiaries in a karaoke parlor in Phnom Penh during a recent visit to Cambodia.

The exchange of sex for money remains a major driver of the spread of HIV/AIDS throughout Southeast Asia, but the karaoke bars, massage parlors, beer gardens, and other settings where these transactions are brokered remain some of the most viable employment venues for vulnerable women.

In Cambodia—where more than 10 percent of female entertainment workers are infected with HIV, and more than 25 percent of these women and girls report having no education—USAID programming supported by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS Relief

(PEPFAR) is implementing a new approach to reducing HIV risk by focusing on the central principle of the Global Health Initiative: that the health and well-being of women is key to the health of all.

Instead of exclusively focusing on distributing condoms and conducting risk-reduction education for high-risk women, the SmartGirl program aims to improve the sexual and reproductive health of its beneficiaries more broadly through linkages to personal counseling, voluntary family planning services, clinical care, savings schemes, and legal services.

Late last year, the program received a PEPFAR Heroes award from the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator for its efforts to reduce the risks associated with entertainment work, while also supporting women in the pursuit of other employment.

"We're committed to having women in the driver's seat," said Michael Cassell, the coordinator of the PEPFAR initiative in Cambodia. "SmartGirl is largely designed and run by entertainment workers to address their own felt needs. And the skills they acquire in the process help many of them to consider and pursue other

careers, including ones in HIV and reproductive health service delivery.”

Avoiding “Message Fatigue”

Previous HIV/AIDS programs have focused on raising awareness of HIV, and educating people about how to avoid getting infected. But by demonstrating that staying healthy is key to

The SmartGirl program, which is implemented by USAID-partner Family Health International, currently provides services to 12,600 of the estimated 35,000 women working in clubs and night spots in Cambodia. The program is funded by PEPFAR but is consistent with the overarching

international recognition in the form of a Millennium Development Goals country award for cutting adult HIV prevalence in half, from 2 percent to 0.9 percent between 1998 and 2006, while extending HIV-related care to more than 70 percent of HIV-infected adults, and HIV treatment to more than 90 percent of eligible individuals.

The estimated proportion of sex workers infected with HIV is down to around 10 percent from over 21 percent in 2003, according to the 2006 HIV Sentinel Surveillance (HSS). However, the maternal mortality ratio in Cambodia remains the second highest in East Asia.

“We’re particularly excited about the potential of this program to serve as a model for the scale-up of higher quality and more holistic approaches to address the needs of populations at high risk for HIV infection,” said Cassell. “Many of the service delivery and referral protocols pioneered through SmartGirl are now being implemented as part of Cambodia’s national program with support from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.”

In the past decade, the U.S. government has invested more than \$150 million in HIV/AIDS programs in the Southeast Asian nation, providing almost 40 percent of the resources available to the national response. ■

“Almost 30 percent of entertainment workers in Cambodia report having an abortion in the past year, suggesting inconsistent condom use and unmet needs for family planning.”

the pursuit of education, wealth, happiness, and other personal objectives, SmartGirl strives to engage beneficiaries while sidestepping some of the “message fatigue” and monotony associated with more didactic approaches. Education sessions are run by peers, cover a broad range of topics that are updated regularly, and offer referrals to free HIV testing, family planning, and other services.

During a recent visit to a SmartGirl club in Phnom Penh, U.S. Rep. Laura Richardson (D-Calif.) was inspired to join program beneficiaries in a rousing karaoke rendition of Gloria Gaynor’s “I Will Survive,” noting her appreciation for the leadership of club members in providing health education and referrals to health care, vocational training, and legal services to other entertainment workers.

“I am so proud of you,” Richardson told the club members.

objectives of the Global Health Initiative, the U.S. government’s six-year, \$63 billion commitment to help partner countries strengthen their health systems, with a particular focus on improving the health of women, newborns, and children.

“Almost 30 percent of entertainment workers in Cambodia report having an abortion in the past year, suggesting inconsistent condom use and unmet needs for family planning,” said Cassell. “By linking these women to sexual and reproductive health services, we stand to prevent new HIV infections while also reducing maternal mortality—the latter arguably being Cambodia’s biggest public health challenge.”

A Model Approach

Cambodia is home to one of the most renowned national success stories in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Late last year, the country received

Combating Early Marriage from the Ground Up



Photo by Pathfinder-Ethiopia

Yeshi Alem, left, educates her village about the perils of making girls marry young. She is seen here with one of the women she has been counseling.

By Elisa Walton

At age 12, Loko, whose last name is withheld for privacy reasons, was forced to marry a man 50 years her senior. As with many child marriages in her home country of Ethiopia, it was a family member who made the decision that derailed her childhood. The 10th of 11 children, she was sold off by her older brother after their father died. Marriage brought a destitute life—her husband was too old to work, and they often went hungry.

Two years later, she became pregnant. After a difficult delivery, she lost her child and ended up with a fistula, a painful childbirth-related injury that left her incontinent—and which could

have been prevented with more accessible medical care such as a C-section.

After seven years, Loko's life took a sudden turn. With USAID assistance, she was sent to a distant hospital to undergo surgery to repair the fistula. Fourteen days later, she walked out of the hospital, healthy again.

It was, she said, “more than I had ever dreamt about [and] made me feel again as a human being equal to the others.”

Determined not to let others suffer as she had, Loko became a community advocate against child marriage. “I promised that I will continue to work hard on these issues throughout my life, with full commitment to act as a model,” she said.

In recognition that women like Loko are the most powerful advocates for women's rights in their communities, USAID is supporting other efforts to help women use their voices and stories to help others.

One such program, “Through Our Eyes,” helps community members communicate their stories through video and raise issues that are often not discussed. The project has worked with communities in Liberia, Southern Sudan, Rwanda, Uganda, and Thailand to produce 40 short videos.

In one video, a man lures a young girl into his house under the premise of buying the fruit she is selling. This film and others are used to illustrate topics that are all too common around

the world, including rape, child marriage, and domestic violence.

In Liberia, a video made in collaboration with the Fistula Rehabilitation Center on the link between early marriage and fistula was shown to 629 women and 462 men, successfully educating them about the risks involved and persuading many of the women to seek care at local health-care facilities.

The Child Bride Pandemic

Worldwide, there are approximately 51 million child brides—those married under the age of 18—and over the next 10 years, an estimated 100 million girls, or roughly a third of the population of the United States, will be married before the age of 18. Many factors, including poverty, poor education, and traditional practices, contribute to the enduring practice of child marriage. In addition, girls below the age of 15 are five times more likely to die in childbirth than women in their 20s. They are also predisposed to sustain injuries, such as fistulas, which plague approximately 2 million women worldwide. These injuries could be prevented with timely access to emergency obstetric care.

The USAID-produced videos have been shown at 440 community “playbacks” around the world. After the video, trained facilitators guide public discussions with the audience. The goal is for the videos not only to build awareness, but also to transform women’s roles in the process.

According to Liberian video trainer Albert Pyne, “usually in our setting, in the Liberian setting, Liberian

women don’t really speak in public, especially when the men are around. Whenever they gather, they don’t speak openly. But if you take the video to the community and do a playback, the women see themselves sometimes in the picture and they don’t care who is around. They will speak their mind . . . and you will see their emotion.”

“I teach from experience. I know the hardships of raising many children.”

As a result, “it empowers our sisters, our mothers, to speak for themselves, to express their feeling about the level of violence against them, and the way out The video can mobilize the community for itself,” Pyne said.

However, community involvement does not stop there.

Acknowledging that the deeper roots of the practice have to be addressed, USAID has helped fund an additional program in Ethiopia that engages religious leaders, teachers, and the public in forums to discuss the harmful effects of early marriage.

Opening up the Floor

At advocacy sessions in the Tigray and Amhara regions in 2005, representatives from the country’s main religious bodies—Muslims, Orthodox Christians, Catholics, and Evangelists—agreed to resolutions

condemning early marriage and vowing to teach their followers about the dangers of such practices. At an advocacy session, one Muslim leader explained the importance of these measures: “When girls are married at a young age, they get hurt because their bodies have not matured yet. We, as religious leaders, should be serious about this.”

These efforts have begun to pay off. According to USAID partner Pathfinder, the national rate of child marriage in Ethiopia fell from 33.1 percent to 21.4 percent between 1998 and 2008. In the Amhara region, where the practice was particularly entrenched, the rate fell from 61.8 percent to 44.8 percent over the 10 years of the USAID-Pathfinder intervention. Yeshe Alem, from the Amhara region, is another example of the new attitude that is beginning to spread in Ethiopia. With five children of her own, including four girls, she has helped prevent more than 300 early marriages in her community, working through its early marriage committee.

“I teach from experience. I know the hardships of raising many children,” Alem said. “My husband now sees the benefits of what I started eight years ago even though he wasn’t convinced of it then.”

For more on USAID’s work to combat child marriage, see “Yemeni Communities Unite Against Child Marriage” in the online edition of FrontLines. ■

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Interview with Donald Steinberg

Photo courtesy of NATO



Donald Steinberg is the deputy administrator for USAID. He previously served as deputy president of the International Crisis Group. He is also a former member of the U.N. Civil Society Advisory Group on Women, Peace and Security, a former board member of the Women's Refugee Commission, and also previously served on the advisory panel to the executive director of the U.N. Development Fund for Women. He has written extensively on issues related to women in conflict and gender empowerment, and has been a strong advocate for gender issues throughout his career.

Steinberg recently sat down with FrontLines Managing Editor Kelly Ramundo to discuss the role of gender in development.

FRONTLINES: The issue of women and girls is near and dear to your heart. Can you talk a little bit about your personal experiences that have led you to be such a champion of women's issues and women's empowerment?

DONALD STEINBERG: It began with my very first assignment with the Foreign Service. I was 22 years old and was sent to the Central African Republic. One of my first tasks was to help put together a rural health project in the Ouham region.

We started out by going to the region and talking to the health providers, who were nearly all women, and to average citizens. After a lengthy process of drawing on their wisdom, we put together a project that focused on mother-child health care, immunization, and water and sanitation.

By the time I left the Central African Republic two years later, we could already see declines in infant and maternal mortality, as well as a new sense of empowerment for women who were at the center of this

project. And realizing that my contributions in part had helped spark that change and had helped women and kids thrive, I was hooked.

FL: So why women, specifically? What happens when you invest in a woman in the development context?

DS: It's important for so many reasons. First of all, we have the opportunity to draw on the talents, insights, and institutional knowledge of half the population that has been traditionally excluded from project design and implementation.

But there's a special role for women in key development areas, including President Obama's top development initiatives. On the Global Health Initiative, women are at the center of improving health standards and incorporating new health practices into their families and communities. In terms of the Feed the Future initiative, women represent some 70 percent of the producers of food, and, thus, empowering women is key to introducing new agricultural techniques and a new market-oriented

focus on value chains. The same can be said of adaptation and remediation efforts for climate change, promotion of governance and democracy, crisis response, and economic growth.

FL: Can you point to a specific example of where USAID is innovating in its approach to women-centered policies?

DS: One practical example is the introduction of new fuel-efficient cooking equipment and methods. Especially in Africa, we are relying on women to move away from traditional dependence on charcoal, which has a devastating impact on the environment through deforestation, causes severe respiratory problems, and draws labor away from more productive uses. Solar cookers or other new forms of food preparation have the potential to encourage fundamental change in these societies and economies.

FL: In your experience, what is the benefit of involving women in post-conflict resolution? And where has this been done particularly well?

DS: The systematic exclusion of women from the negotiation of peace agreements and implementing bodies is one of the key reasons why so many of these agreements ultimately fail and countries return to conflict. Involving women means that a broad range of issues that are important to the population are addressed, such as accountability for past abuses, psycho-social support for victims of violence, restoration of health and educational systems, reintegration of displaced persons and refugees, and trafficking in persons. All of these issues tend to be ignored when it's simply the men with the guns who are sitting around the table negotiating or engaging in the peace implementation body.

Secondly, women bring ground truth to a process. The men involved in the armed conflict don't have the same sense as to the social and reconstruction needs as women who have remained in their societies who have seen the impact of conflict and recognize the difficulty of demobilizing soldiers and returning them to their communities.

Perhaps most importantly, involving women builds public and civil-society support for a peace process. In too many peace processes, once the momentum for political unification or military disengagement starts to wane, popular support is insufficient to see it through to the end.

The men with the guns have to end the war, but society as a whole—and, in particular, women—must build the peace.

FL: There have been recent academic challenges to the benefits of education programming in development. Can

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U.S. Moves to Fulfill U.N. Resolution on Women, Peace, and Security

USAID is playing a central role as the United States crafts a strategy to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which lays out a broad set of approaches designed to empower women in conflict-affected nations.

The resolution, known simply as 1325, was first adopted a little more than 10 years ago by the U.N. The international body then asked member nations to develop National Action Plans that address how they would promote women's participation in peacebuilding in their countries through their diplomacy and development efforts.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton announced the United States' commitment to write its action plan late last year, and USAID co-hosted an event with the U.S. Institute of Peace in November 2010 to formally jump start it.

Back then, Sarah Mendelson, deputy assistant administrator in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, said: "We at USAID are working toward a comprehensive strategy of implementation for 1325—and under the guidance of Deputy Administrator Don Steinberg, we will be leaders in the donor community on this issue."

Steinberg has been an advocate for women's empowerment for some time. (See Q&A with Steinberg on page 26.)

The National Security Council is leading the interagency effort, with USAID providing development and humanitarian expertise, and representatives from the Departments of Defense and State contributing their knowledge. Each agency is developing a component of the plan that shows how it will implement 1325 through its policies and programs.

"It became an opportunity for USAID to share its efforts to integrate women within its peace and security planning and programs with its inter-agency partners," said Jessica O'Connor, a project development officer in USAID's Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation. Such efforts include supporting women's participation in peace processes and reconciliation efforts, providing life-saving assistance to women and girls in conflict areas, and reducing the risks of sexual and gender-based violence for vulnerable groups.

Though the planning is still in the formative stage, the overarching goals are to assess what the United States is doing well—and build on that—and to pinpoint weakness and ways to improve. The plan will also ultimately address a gender-sensitive approach to relief and recovery, and integration of gender training and analysis throughout USAID's programming, said Summer Lopez, a democracy specialist with USAID.

Women especially are often absent from the decision-making table once conflict has ended and post-conflict planning needs to begin—many times because they are not seen as key stakeholders or face other barriers to

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The Women Scientists Breaking Molds in Mozambique

Eleven Awardees Out to Prove Women Can Set a New Course for Agriculture in Their Country and Beyond

By *Cristiana Pereira*

You are a world-renowned scientist. You spend years in a lab developing a top-notch variety of beans as part of the global drive to fight poverty by promoting food security in developing countries. Finally, you come up with a sample that contains the potential for an affordable solution to improve the nutrition of millions of low-income families.

This is the first step in a long chain of labor that will involve transfer of technologies to rural producers, but you have secured funding and expectations are high.

Yet, when your beans are test-marketed, consumers reject them. What went wrong?

“No one remembered to ask women whether they liked them,” says Esperança Chamba, a researcher and head of cooperation at Mozambique’s Agricultural Research Institute (IIAM). “It’s not enough to be productive, you need to consider how much time it will take a woman to cook the beans and how much time she needs to collect firewood. And then there’s flavor—if it doesn’t taste any good, she will be held accountable for it.”

Chamba, who specializes in natural resources management, is one of 11 women scientists in Mozambique who were selected from



Photo by Carlos Litulo

Alda Tomo

among hundreds of applicants from 10 sub-Saharan countries as fellows of the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) project.

AWARD was established in 2008 by the Gender & Diversity Program of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), following a three-year pilot program in East Africa. It is a professional development program that strengthens the research and leadership skills of African women in agricultural science. The project is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and USAID.

“In Women’s Hands”

Chamba’s example of a failed attempt in experimental nutrition finely captures the context of women and agricultural research and development in Africa.

“Most of the work in the fields is in women’s hands,” says rural extension officer Claudia Nhatembe, during a break from the sweet potato fields on the rich soils of IIAM’s Umbeluzi Agricultural Station, some 30



Photo courtesy of Alexandra Jorge

Alexandra Jorge

kilometers outside the capital, Maputo. “It’s hard work—plowing, sowing, and harvesting. For men, it’s mostly handling the plantation’s irrigation systems.”

In Africa, women like Nhatembe carry most of the burden of running the household, raising children, tending to their husbands, fetching water, collecting firewood, cooking and cleaning, and plowing and sowing. They are the pillars of society, yet are commonly ignored. “We give rural women a voice, because through our work, they will also have a voice,” says Carla Menezes, a researcher and head of nutrition at IIAM.

“Scientists are on the cutting edge of solving Africa’s food crisis. But we need to urgently address the gender gap in our scientific community,” says Akinwumi Adesina, vice president of policy and partnerships of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa. “We need more women pursuing careers in agricultural science because women are the face of African farming.”



Photo by Carlos Litulo

Anabela Manhiça



Photo by Carlos Litulo

Dacia Correia



Photo by Carlos Litulo

Filomena dos Anjos

The Leaky Pipeline

Research shows that the number of women enrolling in agricultural sciences is steadily increasing, but women researchers tend to drop out as they move up the career ladder. Termed the “leaky pipeline,” this phenomenon is generally attributed to traditional, male-dominated organizational dynamics, in addition to cultural barriers to women’s education and advancement. AWARD seeks to reverse that trend.

“We need good collaboration to make sure that women are equal partners with men farmers all the way through the process,” U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said recently in Nairobi. “The AWARD program is a great example. It supports women scientists working to improve farming here in Africa and to fight hunger and poverty. And we need women represented in our laboratories, as well as in our fields.”

Recent studies indicate that the majority of those who produce, process, and market Africa’s food are women, but only one in four agricultural researchers is female.

A study by AWARD and the Agricultural Science and Technology Indicators that looked at key trends in sub-Saharan Africa found that the overall proportion of female professional agricultural and higher education staff increased from 18 percent between 2000 and 2001 to 24 percent between 2007 and 2008. Female staffing levels were particularly low in Ethiopia, Togo, Niger, and Burkina Faso, whereas in Botswana, Mozambique, and South Africa levels were high. However, the benchmarking survey—which was conducted in 125 agricultural research and higher education agencies in 15 sub-Saharan countries—showed only 14 percent of the management positions were held by women.

“Only with the full involvement and leadership of women in agriculture will Africa succeed in its quest for food security and prosperity,” says Vicki Wilde, director of AWARD and the CGIAR Gender & Diversity Program. “There is no time to lose.”

Addressing the Gender Gap

Mozambique, a former Portuguese colony in southeastern Africa, is the only non-English-speaking country represented in AWARD. With a population of 20 million, it was ranked 22nd out of 134 countries in the Gender Gap Index for 2010.

“We know the people who matter most aren’t the financiers or the agriculture ministers or the assistance workers and partners. They are the women farmers who are the untapped solution to this problem,” says USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah.

“We’re working to ensure that women get equal access to services and support such as financial services that preferentially target women and extension services delivered by female workers. To make this happen, we are investing in women producer networks and expanding fellowship programs such as the AWARD program.”

The 11 Mozambican fellows cover a broad range of agricultural sciences, from forestry management to agro-economics and veterinary medicine, including animal production, reproduction, and nutrition.

continued on next page

Mozambique Scientists



Photo by Carlos Litulo

Esperanca Chamba

“I am inquisitive by nature. I feel enraptured by the process of looking at a problem, imagining solutions, and seeking the adequate answer,” says Paula Pimentel, a senior researcher at IIAM, who is currently studying gender relations in goat-breeding families in the remote district of Chicualacuala, about 500 kilometers from Maputo.

What drives all these women is a focus on pro-poor, community-oriented research objectives, and an awareness of the need to combine traditional knowledge with modern methods to create scientific advancements.

“Learning from local techniques should always be the starting point,” says Anabela Manhiça, senior researcher and head of the Technology Transfer Department at IIAM. “Rural producers have abundant knowledge. It’s always best to learn what they are doing, how they are doing it, and then add the new technology. It doesn’t work when you try to introduce something completely new.”



Photo by Carlos Litulo

Filomena dos Anjos

The Politics of Independence

While all of them share a passion for furthering agricultural knowledge to benefit poor rural households, a career in scientific research was not everyone’s first choice. Many were caught in the circumstances of Mozambique’s fledgling growth following independence in 1975.

“It was a different political era,” explains Sónia Maciel, a specialist in animal reproduction. Maciel is an accomplished researcher who is widely published in scientific journals, but her dream was to be a linguist. “Circumstances were such that people were sent to technical schools to meet the country’s growth objectives and to fill certain positions in different economic areas.”

Today, Maciel is among Mozambique’s leading scientists, with groundbreaking research on the Nguni/Landim cattle, an important indigenous breed of the Southern Africa region. Through AWARD, she won a research placement at the Nairobi-based International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), where she is now pursuing her PhD.



Photo courtesy of Isilda Nhantumbo

Isilda Nhantumbo

In Africa, cultural norms are among the major constraints that women in science careers face. Other constraints, according to AWARD, include family demands that tend to make women less mobile than male counterparts; the fact that some male managers are uncomfortable with female leaders; a lack of role models and poor access to support networks; and a lack of leadership skills and organizational support.

AWARD strengthens scientists’ research and leadership skills, offering a comprehensive, yet flexible, career-enhancement fellowship program to build up the talent pool of highly skilled African women in agricultural research and development. It also corresponds directly to achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, with an emphasis on improving the skills of women agricultural researchers focused on the needs of women farmers.

To Mentor and Be Mentored

Each year, AWARD’s steering committee selects 60 applicants from up to 900 candidates. The AWARD



Photo by Carlos Litulo

Marta Francisco

fellows remain in their place of employment or study while benefiting from a well-tested, coordinated career development package built on four cornerstones: mentoring, science capacity building, leadership development, and learning, monitoring, and evaluation.

Role modeling is another key aspect of the fellowship program. Isilda Nhantumbo, a consultant on natural resources management, remembers how she built a “wall of dreams” with a number of young women in Ndlavela, in the outskirts of Maputo.

“I chose this neighborhood because many girls there have no access to information on professional options, and they don’t always fight for a career. They have children at a very young age and think life is over for them. Their parents were there and, in the end, they were pushing the girls to follow our example,” says Nhantumbo, who is just getting accustomed to the bitter European winter after winning a coveted position at the University of Edinburgh.



Photo by Carlos Litulo

Paula Pimentel

Tools for Life

For the 11 fellows, AWARD is, above all, an empowering experience. Over a course of two years, AWARD develops researchers’ skills in proposal writing, opens doors on the global stage of scientific research and decision-making, links them with key

“AWARD has given me more self-confidence and enabled me to be more resolute in attaining my goals.”

people in their field of expertise, and supports their presentation of scientific papers at conferences.

But the crucial change is not what ends on their resumes. “AWARD has given me more self-confidence and enabled me to be more resolute in attaining my goals,” says Maciel, echoing the feelings of all 11 AWARD fellows.



Photo by Carlos Litulo

Sonia Maciel

“I’m already applying the same principles in my personal life,” adds Manhiça. “What is my life purpose and how am I going to achieve it?” From timid researchers or withdrawn lab recluses to influential scientists with the power to determine decision-making processes for national and regional policies that will improve the livelihoods of Africa’s poor—this is where Mozambique’s AWARD fellows want to be.

“Sharing agricultural knowledge is one of the key factors that contribute to alleviating poverty and achieving food security,” adds Marta Francisco, a researcher and communication manager at IIAM.

All 11 women say they share a vision of eradicating poverty and contributing to economic growth through food security and agricultural development. “These outstanding Mozambicans debunk the myth in some science circles that qualified African women researchers ‘aren’t out there’—that they don’t exist in significant numbers,” says Wilde. “Qualified women scientists are out there. These women prove it.” ■

The Superwomen Rebuilding Haiti

By Joanna Stavropoulos

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti

The lurching roar of heavy machinery echoes through the Nazon neighborhood of Port-au-Prince. A heavy machine operator hops into what looks like a toy bulldozer—a skid steer loader. A giant shovel at the front of the tough little machine lifts a bulky piece of rubble as the nimble operator flips switches, turns knobs, and pulls levers from inside the cockpit.

The operator maneuvers again, and the shovel tilts until the rubble tumbles into the bed of a dump truck with a rock-on-rock knocking sound. Once the operator fills the bed, the engine surges and the truck fades into the distance.

The machine operator is not what one might expect: a strapping young man or seasoned construction worker. Instead, Judette Leurbours, a single mother of four, is one of the women driving the rubble removal progress in Nazon.

Leurbours, whose bright eyes sparkle under her hard hat and protective eye gear, watches the loaders pass her. Speaking loudly over the humming and grinding of machines, she says, “I always loved watching the heavy machinery operators. Since it is work that I love, I don’t find it difficult at all.”

Leurbours learned to operate heavy machinery at the Haytrac Center, a CHF International training facility funded by the U.S. government through USAID’s mission in Haiti. USAID also provides essential job-skills training to Haitians in other



Photo by Kendra Helmer, USAID

Judette Leurbours starts her day as a heavy machinery operator clearing rubble from the earthquake in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Leurbours is one of 30 women who went through training at the Haytrac Center, a USAID-funded training facility.

priority sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing.

“Rubble is one of the biggest challenges to reconstruction and recovery in Haiti,” says USAID/Haiti Mission Director Carleene Dei. “The Haytrac Center project was designed before the earthquake to empower Haitians, including women, through long-term job creation. After the earthquake, these trainees have been in extremely high demand for their skills and are actively rebuilding their country.” The 7.0 earthquake that struck outside Haiti’s capital on Jan. 12, 2010, created a massive 10 million cubic meters of rubble. In the year since, the U.S. government has funded the removal of 1.3 million cubic meters, but there is a long way to go. Rubble removal in neighborhoods like Nazon, where nearly 70 percent of the houses were damaged or destroyed during the earthquake, is critical to rebuilding.

New construction can’t take place until the ground is cleared.

Leurbours is one of many Haitians involved in rubble removal, but she has also accomplished a great deal as a single mother in Haiti. She raised her four children “almost single-handedly,” she says proudly.

She comes to work every day and joins her eight male and one female colleagues. The team jokes around before climbing into their heavy equipment to start demolition and rubble loading.

“I love working in the team. When we have to do something on the site, we do it with solidarity and joy,” she says, adding: “I love organizing where there is disorganization.”

Homegrown Talent

CHF International and their partner Haytrac, Haiti’s official Caterpillar dealer, operate the Haytrac Center.

Since opening in 2009, it has trained 160 heavy machine operators, including 30 women, who are now contributing to the reconstruction effort in Haiti as well as helping ease, if only somewhat, the Caribbean nation's crushing unemployment statistics, estimated to be at 70–80 percent in the formal sector.

"The program was set up because there were hardly any Haitian heavy machinery operators—most of them had to be brought in from the Dominican Republic or the other places," said Alberto Wilde, CHF International's country director in Haiti.

And in a country with so many out of work, those jobs are too valuable to be shopped out abroad. The average monthly salary for a rookie heavy equipment operator, excluding weekly bonuses or other extras paid for a job, is around \$950 per month for a seven-day work week. This equates to roughly six times the minimum Haitian salary of \$5 per day. What's more, a more seasoned operator can make double and even triple this figure.

Machine operation jobs have traditionally gone to men in Haiti, and women rarely have the opportunity to learn construction skills.

"We wanted to break that stigma," says Wilde, explaining how difficult it is in Haitian society to accept that women are doing such a job. "We want to incorporate women and give them an equal opportunity—especially since we recognize that women are the drivers of the economy in this country,

they are often the heads of households, bringing up the children."

Top of Her Class

Roselette Dupervil is another Haytrac-trained heavy machinery operator working at the Nazon rubble removal site.

"She is fast and works well," shouts CHF's Rubble Removal Manager Yrving Mehu over the crashing noise of Dupervil's excavator as it smashes into a badly damaged home to bring it down safely. "She is in my top three operators."

"She is really amazing. For all practical purposes, she shouldn't have been this far ahead this quickly; she is as good as someone with many more years of experience," says Haytrac Manager Patrick Bonnefil. Because of people seeing Dupervil on the big excavator, he explains, "I am getting a lot of demands and a lot of women that want to follow in her footsteps."

Dupervil is 23, single, and doesn't have children. She wants to keep it that way for now.

"My dream since childhood is to become a civil engineer," she says with a smile. Unable to pay for a civil engineering education, she took advantage of the Haytrac training since it covered the same field.

"I love my job," she says. "I want to become the best female professional to work in this domain."

Leurbours hopes that her daughters and the younger female generation including Dupervil don't have to live in the Haiti she has lived in.

"Every day I dream of a better Haiti where all the Haitian women can live



Photo by Kendra Helmer, USAID

Roselette Dupervil, a 23-year-old heavy machinery operator, is one of 30 women who went through training at the Haytrac Center.

better. Because right now, they don't live in this country," Leurbours says. "They don't live because they are not included. The young girls become old before adulthood, such is their misery. The women who have had a chance to go to school and be professionally trained don't find work easily. Thus, in general, women get to know a sad reality. . . .

"I wish that the Haitian women could become trained, work, and become independent economically," she adds. "But, the most important [goal] is that this society learns to better value and appreciate its women." ■

Joanna Stavropoulos is the communications manager for CHF International Haiti.

Giving Women More Credit

By Stephanie Grosser

While women across the developing world thrive thanks to microfinance—small loans that beget small, though often profitable ventures—Kelly Yohannes dreamed on a larger scale. She wanted to build an upscale, environmentally friendly hotel in Ethiopia, where she lives.

But for that, she needed a large amount of financing from her local bank. It did not take long for Yohannes, a widow who had shared her hotel dream with her late husband, to realize that women like her face extreme difficulties accessing financing.

Three years ago, USAID decided to do something about the challenges would-be entrepreneurs like Yohannes face by partially sharing loan risk with a bank in Ethiopia. With a USAID guarantee, the bank agreed to start lending to women seeking loans for small- and medium-size enterprises, opening the door to credit for Yohannes and other female entrepreneurs in Ethiopia.

To date, USAID has guaranteed over \$4 million in loans for women borrowers in Ethiopia as well as Ethiopians returning to the country after living abroad. The entrepreneurs run the gamut, from hoteliers to flower farmers.

The Confidence Gap

A lack of confidence towards private-sector borrowers is common not only in Ethiopia but throughout the developing world. While banks in the United States and other developed countries tend to have low amounts



Photo by Joseph Obi, USAID

The patio to Kelly's Retreat opens to several blocks of gardens.

of cash on hand in order to maximize lending, banks in developing countries are much more conservative and prefer to keep most of their money in safe treasury accounts or bonds.

When these risk-averse institutions do decide to lend, they often require that borrowers present collateral totaling 200 percent of the amount of the loan they are seeking. It is this lack of collateral that profoundly impacts women, who are often discouraged from owning property due to cultural and social norms. It is, in fact, one of the most significant factors driving the inability of women-owned businesses to access commercial bank finance.

After USAID established a loan guarantee with the Bank of Abyssinia in Ethiopia in 2008, Yohannes found the bank suddenly willing to take a chance on her business plan. Her

perseverance was awarded with \$550,000 in loans.

With credit in hand, she purchased an 11,000-square-meter plot of abandoned land in the town of Adama and began the laborious process of clearing the area for construction. Most construction projects of this magnitude are completed in seven years, but between USAID's technical assistance and Yohannes' dedication, her hotel was open for business just two years later.

Gardens, Dignitaries, and Poultry

Since Kelly's Retreat opened in early 2010, it has hosted several dignitaries, including former heads of state, first ladies, and a delegation of Nigerian government officials. The hotel centers around a large reception room, library, board room, and

tea lounge for guests seeking to get away from the main city. The 22 eco-friendly suites all open up to dense gardens comprised of 1,000 diverse species of flora. In addition, the hotel has won several awards for environmental compliance and quality control.

Every day, Yohannes travels three hours round-trip from her base in Addis Ababa to ensure the hotel is operating smoothly and to supervise her 67 full-time employees.

“My husband and I had vowed to establish an intellectual and cultural center, unlike any hotel in East Africa, which would showcase Ethiopia in a positive light, but also have influences from various cultures around the world,” said Yohannes.

Her story is not atypical. Asegedech Meshesha grew up in Ethiopia but long ago moved to the United States, where she became a naturalized

citizen. She successfully raised her family in the United States, but when she learned that she could qualify for a loan to start a business back home, she jumped at the opportunity. She had grown up around chickens and knew she could help people in Ethiopia by establishing a poultry farm. In Ethiopia, chicken is usually imported and, therefore, cost prohibitive to all but the wealthy. After receiving \$87,000 in working capital loans in 2008, she gradually built her farm, which now boasts 2,800 chickens that produce 1,350 eggs a day.

“...women now have a channel of credit to establish the businesses of their dreams.”

A Credit Legacy

Since 1999, USAID’s Development Credit Authority has helped 87,000 entrepreneurs—including 33,000 women—realize their dreams through partial loan guarantees. By enabling banks and other financial institutions to “test” new borrower sectors, the Agency is working to change the behavior of hundreds of banks and thousands of loan officers around the world.

As banks realize that business ventures they once perceived as risky are in fact profitable, they gain confidence in these new sectors and borrowers. In Ethiopia, the proof is in the numbers. There have been zero defaults, meaning USAID has not paid any claims to Bank of Abyssinia for the loans.

“By encouraging lending to female entrepreneurs, USAID helped the bank identify a profitable sector,” said Sehul Truesaw, who works with USAID to provide technical assistance and helped Kelly Yohannes secure her loan. “More importantly, women now have a channel of credit to establish the businesses of their dreams.” ■



Photo by Joseph Obi, USAID

Kelly Yohannes walks across the dining room of her hotel, which features artwork from her travels throughout Africa.

Interview with Donald Steinberg

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you offer a counterargument to those who say we should not be investing in education, and in the education of girls, specifically?

DS: Academics and researchers may quibble on the edges, but the vast preponderance of analytical as well as anecdotal evidence shows that there are few better investments you can make in development than girls' education, health, food security, and social empowerment.

FL: In your three decades of development work, do you have a project or achievement that you are most proud of?

DS: I was quite honored to serve over the past year or so on the U.N. Secretary General's Civil Society Advisory Group for Women, Peace and Security. This group was led by Mary Robinson, the former U.N. high commissioner for human rights, and Bineta Diop, who was the head of Femmes Africa Solidarité, and included a dozen activists and experts on women and armed conflict.

Basically, the group was asked by the secretary general to come up with concrete, time-bound, and measurable actions to reinvigorate global efforts to implement U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325. This resolution, passed in October 2000, identified dozens of steps that the international community should take to empower and protect women and girls in the context of armed conflict, and ensure their full participation in peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction and governance.

U.S. Moves to Fulfill U.N. Resolution sidebar continued from p. 27

participation such as a lack of transportation, childcare, or security. The National Action Plan will, in part, says O'Connor, "make sure their participation is meaningful."

The U.S. effort ultimately will inform how USAID looks at gender in its programs.

For now, Agency and other U.S. government officials are holding meetings to work on the nuts and bolts of drafting the plan, including reviewing plans from other U.N. member countries.

The U.N. asked all its member states to develop National Action Plans following the tenets of 1325, and 23 countries have done so thus far. The United States hopes to complete its plan by fall 2011. ■

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Our advisory group put together practical actions, supported by financial resources, to address sexual violence against women displaced by war, to expand livelihood and educational opportunities for women and girls, to train peacekeepers and military forces on gender issues and hold them accountable for abuses, to enhance reproductive health care for women in emergency situations, to bring more women to the peace table, and so on. We also highlighted the need for funding to assist the new agency, U.N. Women, to provide global leadership in these areas under the guidance of the talented Michelle Bachelet.

I welcomed the decision of Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to announce in October that the United States would prepare its own national action plan to implement 1325, an effort that is being led

by the indefatigable Ambassador Melanne Verwee at the State Department with very strong USAID support. (See "U.S. Moves to Fulfill U.N. Resolution" on page 27.)

The Victimhood Barrier

FL: What do you see as the greatest challenge facing women in the developing world today?

DS: The toughest challenge is to overcome the stigma of victimization that bedevils this whole field. Too many programs and projects in this arena categorize women as victims, rather than the key actors in addressing conflict and development challenges. And to speak frankly, too frequently, women themselves embrace that victimhood. To address this, we are establishing a four-pillar approach to gender considerations at USAID.

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The first pillar is ensuring that gender is mainstreamed and integrated in all our development work, and in particular, food security, global health, and global climate change.

Second, we are focusing on women's empowerment in political, economic, and social terms. This means not only supporting women's political caucuses, girls' education, or mother-child health projects in countries, but taking these projects to scale around the world.

A third area is protection and participation. This effort involves prioritizing issues related to women's participation in peace processes, preventing and responding to sexual violence in armed conflict situations, implementing U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325, and engaging in anti-trafficking programs.

The fourth pillar is walking the walk in-house, ensuring that USAID is a leader in women's empowerment in our system. We need to make sure that women are recruited for entry into the Civil and Foreign Service, empowered to fully contribute to our development mission, given opportunities through mentorships, treated fairly in the promotion/evaluation/assignment processes, and challenged to lead our agency.

Addressing the Skeptics

FL: If you could address all of them right now, what would your advice be for new members of Congress who might be skeptical about the value of foreign assistance?

DS: The money we spend on foreign assistance represents the best investment we could possibly make in our

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national security, in our national economic interest, and in promotion of our values.

For less than 1 percent of our federal budget, we are encouraging development around the world that will keep countries from descending into instability, where we would have to send American troops. It keeps societies from trafficking in women, in drugs, in arms. It keeps societies from spinning off huge numbers of refugees and illegal migrants. It keeps societies from being the breeding grounds for terrorists or for pandemic diseases.

Development is also in our national economic interest. Developing countries are also going to be the key to our economic prosperity in the future,

given that this is where most of the new growth in external markets is going to occur, and, thus, the opportunity for American business to export and generate jobs for Americans.

Finally, development assistance is the best investment we can make in creating the kind of world we want to live in, a world that's prosperous, a world that's democratic and respectful of human rights, a world that's peaceful. ■

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U.S. government assistance in Tanzania is training smallholder farmers in agricultural methods and is facilitating linkages to local, regional, and international markets. This assistance will increase the incomes of smallholder farmers—the majority of them women.

